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ABSTRACT

Change and persistent problems in the quality of life of open-country families (n=317) in four eastern Kentucky counties (Harlan, Perry, Whitley, and Wolfe) were examined via comparison of data derived from surveys of household heads in 1961 and 1973. The 1961 survey provided data on occupations, income, level of living, and opinions re: the nature of society and other conditions. The 1973 survey provided additional data re: the nature of change in a family situation (improvement vs deterioration) and the perceived direction of change re: wages/salaries; welfare programs; politics and political parties; job opportunities; medical services; education; and other aspects of life. Results indicated: families at all stages of the life cycle had advanced in material wealth; aspects of the family life cycle seemed to have affected opinions re: direction of change and current situation only in terms of job opportunities, real income, and the public schools; considerable dissatisfaction was expressed by the majority re: most aspects of the political/economic situation and man's condition in society. Since dissatisfaction was more prevalent in 1973, correlations were made between the rapid expansion of aspirations/desires and the rising levels of income among the moderately comfortable and between dissatisfaction with government/politics among lower level families and income. (JC)

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QUALITY OF LIFE C[illegible]NTRY FAMILIES IN FOUR EASTERN KENTUCKY COUNTIES: CHANGE AND PERSISTENT PROBLEMS, 1961 AND 1973

DEC 11 1975

by C. Milton Coughenour

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QUALITY OF LIFE OF COUNTRY FAMILIES IN FOUR EASTERN KENTUCKY COUNTIES: CHANGE AND PERSISTANT PROBLEMS, 1961 AND 1973*

In 1955, a Report to the United States Secretary of Agriculture (U.S.D.A., 1955) indicated that families in almost all of the rural counties in the southeastern United States had low incomes and levels of living. The Southern Appalachian area was among the most seriously depressed parts of this area. In the early 1960's, the social and economic conditions of life in Appalachia and the region's persistent problems were further documented (Ford, 1962).

This regional survey indicated that, despite evidence of improvement in the quality of life during the two decades after World War II, most people in Appalachia were poor and their institutions often were inadequate by comparison with the rest of the nation. Although birth rates were declining, families still were relatively large. The median income of rural families was below the poverty line, and that of urban families only slightly above it. Many required welfare support and the fortunes (or misfortunes) of the largest numbers of employed rural people were tied to subsistence farming, part-time off-farm jobs, lumbering and coal mining. Migration of people to find better opportunities outside the region was heavy.

Compared with national standards, the schools were relatively poor in resources and the quality of educational programs and the educational attainments of most adults were low. Churches were relatively small and predominately other-worldly in religious orientation. Although mortality rates indicated a generally healthy population, the region lagged behind the nation in hospitals, medical services and physicians.

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Road systems had improved relatively little, and many hill and hollow folk still lived in semi-isolation from outside influences, with the radio, occasional visits to nearby villages and small towns, and visits from relatives outside the mountains providing the principal linkages to modern, "affluent," America.

Nevertheless, the Southern Appalachian region was changing in various ways. It was losing its provincialism; socioeconomic conditions of living were improving, although not so rapidly as elsewhere in the nation. Especially in rural areas, where poverty and isolation were the normal condition of life, people were not much inclined to organize for local improvement, and often sought solace in fatalistic rationalizations about present conditions. Even so, the greater awareness of deprivation and lack of opportunities doubtless contributed to what Caudill referred to in 1962 (p. 332) as the tragedy of human spirit in which so many have become "listless, hopeless, and without ambition."

Since 1960, however, state and federal governments and private agencies have introduced numerous programs designed to develop resources, both human and natural, and to improve the conditions of life of people in Eastern Kentucky and throughout the region. To what extent and in what ways has the quality of life changed, and how do country people now feel about their circumstances, the nature of society, and the future?

The purpose of this report is to answer this question in some degree. The aim is to describe changes in the quality of life of open-country families in four counties of Eastern Kentucky---Harlan, Perry, Whitley, and Wolfe.

In 1961, a sample of families in these counties was surveyed as to occupations, income, levels of living, opinions about the nature of society and other conditions. Families in these areas were surveyed again in 1973.[1] In addition to the information obtained in 1961, they

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[1] These surveys were conducted as part of two studies of open-country families in the south: S-44, Adjustment Potentials of Families in Low-Income Areas of the Rural South, and S-79, Rural Development and The Quality of Life in the Rural South.

were asked about the nature of change in their own family situation--whether it had improved or gotten worse--and how they viewed the direction of change and the current situation in wages and salaries, welfare programs, job opportunities, politics and political parties, medical services, education and other aspects which affect the conditions of life in these counties.

This assessment of change and persistent problems in quality of life thus is based on comparison of the findings of these two surveys and data drawn from Census reports for 1960 and 1970.

QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE EARLY 1960's

In 1960, more than three-fourths of the residents of these four counties lived in rural areas. Data from the 1961 survey show that by almost any national standard they were a deprived group. The households were relatively large--averaging 4.1 persons per household compared with 3.3 for the nation as a whole. Eighty-two percent had less than $4,000 in total family income, and the median family income was only $1,675. Nationally, only 45 percent of the rural families had incomes this low. On a per capita income basis relative deprivation was even more serious. The median per capita family income of $521 (Table 1) was only 23 percent of the national average of $2,223.

Household heads averaged 51.6 years of age, and one out of five male heads under 65 years did not consider himself "fully-able to work." Some had only part-time employment, and 6 percent were unemployed. Those who had jobs, however, liked most aspects of their work. Opportunities for advancement, retirement and other benefits, and amount of money earned were important aspects of their jobs which substantial proportions "disliked" or thought unsatisfactory.

The median years of schooling of the households heads surveyed was 7.0--compared with 8.3 and 9.0 years for rural nonfarm males aged 25 years or older in Kentucky and the United States, respectively.[2]

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[2] Eighty-four percent of household heads were male and 75 percent were nonfarm.

Only 11 percent had completed high school. The educational level thus was relatively low, and only one out of two male heads participated in any formal organization. Homemakers averaged 8.2 years of schooling and more often tended to participate in a formal organization of some kind--usually a religious group. But, participation of both heads and homemakers in formal organizations was relatively low compared with people living in towns or many other rural areas.[3]

In these counties, in general, mining, small farms, and wholesale and retail trade were the principal sources of earned income, but 14 percent of total personal income in these counties came from transfer payments--welfare, pensions, and Social Security--compared with 9 percent for the state as a whole (Ramsey and Warner, 1974). In the 1961 survey most families received income from salary or wages (44 percent) followed in order by retirement pensions and Social Security (29 percent), farming (22 percent), and welfare (17 percent).

By modern standards they lived a spartan life (Table 1). Only 40 percent lived on a hard-surfaced road, and only 47 percent had an automobile. Only a minority had most of the modern household conveniences which make for comfortable living, such as water piped in the house (41 percent), bath or shower (21 percent), inside flush toilet (15 percent), or central heating (13 percent). While 64 percent had a gas or electric range, only 13 percent had an electric sewing machine. Eighty-five percent had a radio and 58 percent had television, but only 26 percent had a telephone, 11 percent a weekly newspaper, and 31 percent a daily newspaper.

Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that 34 percent of the male household heads and 30 percent of the homemakers felt that their family income was unsatisfactory, and 46 and 28 percent of the

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[3] A survey of social participation of rural families in Western Kentucky in 1955 indicated that only 9 percent of the heads and 11 percent of the homemakers were not members of any formal organization (Christiansen, 1955).

heads and homemakers, respectively, said that they had to go without necessities. The more surprising fact is that the majority in each case felt that family income was at least satisfactory and that they were not deprived in the sense of having to go without necessities. Furthermore, despite what many urban Americans would have regarded as unsatisfactory living conditions less than one out of four was interested in moving.

These opinions about their personal situation, however, fail to indicate important attitudes of these country people about the nature of man's condition in society. As others had observed, in matters involving their relationships to governmental officials or the possibilities of future improvement, despair, and hopelessness (anomia) were widespread as reflected in their responses to the following items:[4]

		Heads	Homemakers
		(Percent who agreed)	
(1)	Nowadays a person has to live pretty much for today and let tomorrow take care of itself.....	37	61
(2)	In spite of what some people say, the lot of the average man is getting worse, not better.....	73	66
(3)	It's hardly fair to bring children into the world with the way things look for the future.....	48	63
(4)	These days a person doesn't really know whom he can count on.....	89	89
(5)	There's little use in writing to public officials because often they aren't really interested in the problems of the average man.....	72	77

Three-fifths or more of the homemakers manifested attitudes of hopelessness and despair in all of these respects, and the heads were

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[4]Srole Anomia Scale (1956).

similarly minded on three of the five questions. Among residents of low-income areas in the six states participating in this survey, country people in Eastern Kentucky were the most despairing of all (McCann, 1975).

As many studies have shown, therefore, and as census data and our survey generally confirm, most of the families in country areas of the Cumberland Mountains of Eastern Kentucky in the early 1960's lived in very poor circumstances which, while accepted stoically, bred hopelessness and apathy, as well as frequent bursts of aggression and violence (Ball, 1970a). These general conditions, however, did not necessarily apply equally to all types of families. Some fared better in some respects and others were worse off than implied by the overall statistics.

DIFFERENCES AMONG FAMILIES IN THE EARLY 1960's

To describe differences in the quality of life, families are classified here as to stage in the family life cycle. This enables us to determine how younger and older families, and those with and without children, fared in these conditions of life. The classification is as follows:

I	Working age families without children (head under 60 years of age).
II	Families with only pre-adolescent (young) children at home.
III	Families with adolescent children at home, with none older.
IV	Families with post-adolescent (mature) children at home, with or without other children.
V	Older families without children at home (head aged 60 or older).

Differences in quality of life among these types of families are summarized in Table 1. Family size (median 5.9) and total family income (median $2,200) were greatest for Stage III families, those with adolescent-aged children, and smallest for Stage V, the older families without children (medians 2.4 and $1,675). But, on a per capita basis the situation was quite otherwise. On the average, working-age families without children had the highest income per capita (I, median $855),

while families with adolescent children or older children at home had the lowest per capita income (III, median $419; IV, median $410). For working aged families without children, those with pre-adolescent or adolescent aged children, the percentage of male household heads employed full- or part-time was relatively high, and for the first two family life cycle stages it was higher than the percentage who considered themselves fully able to work. But in Stage IV families with post-adolescent aged children at home as well as those with adolescent aged children (Stage III) the percentages employed were less than the percentages fully able to work.

The older families without children (Stage V) had the most spacious living arrangements--averaging 3.0 rooms per person--while families with young or adolescent-aged children were most often in cramped quarters--averaging only 1.0 rooms per person. But, in road conditions and most material possessions which make for comfortable living, families at different stages in the life cycle did not much differ in the proportions lacking these conveniences. They differed in these respects primarily in the possession of an automobile, which half or more of the families in the first three stages owned, but only 27 percent of the oldest families without children did.

For both household heads and homemakers, those with young or adolescent children at home (Stages II and III) were much less likely than other types of heads and homemakers to belong to a formal organization of some kind.

Regardless of differences in income and employment in 1960-61, there were no large differences among heads of these types of families in the extent of felt satisfaction or dissatisfaction with income, or in saying that they had to go without the necessities of living, and this lack of difference paralles that for material possessions.[5] Among the family types, heads of families who were employed were similarly minded for the most part in liking various aspects of their jobs. Moreover, male heads

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[5] Per capita family income was significantly related to head and homemaker satisfaction with family income and the feeling that they did not have to go without necessities.

of household did not differ by family life cycle stage in their attitudes about the nature of man's relationship to society. That is, they were likely to feel hopeless regardless of stage in the family life cycle.

The attitudes of homemakers, however, did vary significantly by stage in the family life cycle. Homemakers of working age families without children (Stage I) were less often dissatisfied with family income or felt that they had to go without necessities than did other types of homemakers. Differences in this respect paralleled differences in per capita median family incomes. In attitudes about the nature of society, homemakers with post-adolescent (mature) children at home most often were fatalistic or despairing about writing to public officials (89 percent), bringing children into the world (73 percent), and the worsening condition of the average man (74 percent). Those with young children at home were least often apathetic about writing to public officials (62 percent) or hopeless about bringing children into the world (46 percent), while homemakers with adolescent-aged children least often thought the lot of the average man was getting worse (46 percent). Nevertheless, such attitudes were widespread among homemakers at all stages of the family life cycle.

Thus, 1960-61 families living in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky had low incomes and levels of living relative to families elsewhere in the United States; but, manifest dissatisfaction with the level of income was surprisingly low, as well as the feeling that they could not afford necessities. With one exception, neither attitude was significantly related to differences among types of families in per capita income. Nevertheless, questions about the nature of man in society usually elicited feelings of hopelessness and despair. Such responses were made by heads of families regardless of their stage in the family life cycle, but homemakers with pre-adolescent or adolescent children were less despairing in some respects than homemakers at other stages of the family life cycle. It is apparent that attitudes about man in society involved a variety of factors, and further discussion of this issue is deferred until later in this report.

EVENTS DURING THE 1960's

The 1960's and early 1970's brought development of many state, regional, and federal programs designed to improve the conditions of

life in the Appalachian area (and other low-income areas). Employment and manpower training programs were introduced to develop human resource potentials. Schools were consolidated; new community colleges and vocational education centers were established. Efforts were made to develop new industry. Programs for hospital planning and support, vocational rehabilitation, medical care and services, rural ambulance services, and the like were introduced. New programs were established in water supply, sewage and solid waste disposal, flood and pollution control. Food stamps, school lunch, and black lung programs were introduced and other welfare programs were expanded. Legislation regulating surface mining and reclamation was passed. With the assistance of state and federal experts, the Cooperative Extension Service, VISTA community development workers, and many volunteers, community and regional planning and development programs and projects were launched.

The number of different programs and projects in the region as a whole almost defies enumeration, and no attempt has been made herein to catalog them. In the 1973 survey, however, respondents in the four counties mentioned 44 different programs which they felt were either the best or worst governmental programs. Interestingly, those programs, such as educational, employment, and welfare programs, that most respondents regarded as the "best" governmental programs were usually considered by others to be the "worst" programs (Gabbard and Coughenour, 1973). Generally, the lower education and income groups which more often benefitted from governmental programs, were more favorable to their continuation and expansion than those with higher education and incomes. According to many Eastern Kentuckians most of the programs had desirable aims but were poorly or unfairly administered.

One of the aims underlying governmental efforts to improve socio-economic conditions in the mountains was to stem the loss of population. However, out-migration continued to be heavy during the 1960's. By 1970 Harlan and Perry Counties had lost nearly 27 percent of their 1960 populations; Wolfe, 13 percent, and Perry, 6 percent. Incomes of those who remained rose dramatically, however. Per capita family income increased by 59 percent in Harlan, 81 percent in Perry, 167 percent in Whitley, and 162 percent in Wolfe county (Ramsey and Warner, 1974).

The proportional increases in the latter two counties were above the state average, but average per capita income in 1970 in each county still ranged from 43 to 72 percent of the United States average ($3,139), and from 36 to 59 percent of the families by county, and 39 percent in the four counties combined, were below the poverty threshold.

Source of income changed greatly, with farming or farm work declining substantially as an income source while salary, wages, Social Security and welfare income increased proportionately. In the four counties as a whole, the percentage of total personal income derived from transfer payments increased from 14 to 22 percent during the 1960's (compared with an increase from 9 to 12 percent for the entire state), and 37 percent of the increase in total personal income was due to the increase in income from transfer payments. Thus, despite considerable improvement, in economic respects these Cumberland Plateau counties continued to be relatively depressed.

QUALITY OF LIFE OF COUNTRY FAMILIES IN THE EARLY 1970's: HOW MUCH DID IT DIFFER FROM 1960?

Families living in the country were not unaffected by these trends (Table 1). The 317 families surveyed in 1973 averaged 3.1 persons per family--one person smaller than in 1961-- and somewhat fewer of these families had post-adolescent children at home (Stage IV). More were working-aged families with or without pre-adolescent children, or were older families without children. The effect of migration also was evident in the age structure. In median age, household heads were one year older (52.6 years of age) than the 1961 heads of households. They had 8.3 years of schooling--an increase of 1.3 years over the 1961 median--and 18 percent had completed high school. But, in education these household heads continued to lag behind comparable to groups elsewhere,[6] and they less often belonged to any formal organization than in 1961.

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[6] In the 1973 survey, nearly all of the household heads were rural nonfarm, and for rural nonfarm males aged 25 and over in Kentucky in 1970, the median years of education was 8.6, and 10.9 years for the United States.

The families were surveyed in the spring and summer of 1973. The date of the survey is important in this case, as since then the energy crisis and skyrocketing prices for coal have resulted in considerable change in the general economic situation of people in two of the counties--Harlan and Perry--where coal is an abundant resource. The economic depression during 1974-75 doubtless has influenced the situation in the other two counties in the opposite direction. Thus, the employment and income situation may be somewhat different today than indicated by the data presented below, but the overall trends in levels of living and in other respects are not likely to have been greatly affected.

For the country families as a group, median family incomes in 1960 dollars nearly doubled between 1960 and 1972 ($1,700 to $3,380), and owing to the smaller family size, median per capita income did double ($521 to $1,058). This occurred despite the fact that the percentage of male household heads under 65 years who were employed (full or part-time), dropped from 78 to 69 percent while the proportion retired or disabled doubled. (The percentage of homemakers employed increased from 5 to 16 percent between the two surveys). Sources of income changed substantially, with farming or farm work as an income source declining from 22 to 11 percent while those receiving retirement income increased from 29 to 50 percent, and income from salary, wages or business increased slightly (44 to 49 percent). Generally, families had more sources of income in 1973 than in 1961. Even so, family incomes were low compared with rural residents elsewhere in the nation, as 50 percent in these counties had incomes below $4,000 compared with 21 percent of families nationally.

Levels of living as indicated by possession of comfort and convenience items and living space, however, improved greatly. Seventy-nine percent lived on an all-weather road in 1973, compared with only 40 percent who did so in 1961; only 15 percent in 1973 were interested in moving from their present location. The increase in level of living is shown in Table 1. Fourteen percent more than in 1961 had an automobile (64 percent); 34 percent more had water piped into the house (74 percent). Ninety-four percent (up 30 percent) had a gas or electric range; 61 percent (up 38 percent) had a flush toilet inside the house, and 60 percent (up 38 percent) had a bath or shower. Still, only one-third had central

heating--an increase of only 20 percent. Two-thirds had a telephone, and 95 and 93 percent had radios and television sets, respectively. But, only 22 percent (up 11 percent) took a weekly newspaper, and no more than in 1960 (29 percent) received a daily newspaper. The rooms per person ratio climbed from 1.3 to 1.7 during the decade, and the percent of households with less than one room per person decreased from 24 to 13 percent. In these important respects the gap between country and town families in the ountains was considerably reduced during the intervening 12 years,[7] and 57 percent of the heads and homemakers in the country areas in 1973 said that they were somewhat or much better off than a decade earlier compared with 13 percent who felt they were worse off.

Even so, heads and homemakers in 1973 were no more often satisfied with family income than they had been in 1961, and both were much more likely to say that they had to go without necessities--over half felt this way. Moreover, homemakers were nearly as hopeless and despairing about the condition of man in society as they had been in 1961, and unlike the 1961 respondents, male household heads in 1973 were nearly as despondent as the homemakers:

		Heads	Homemakers
		(Percent who agreed)	
(1)	Nowadays a person has to live pretty much for today and let tomorrow take care of itself.....	53	60
(2)	In spite of what some people say, the lot of the average man is getting worse, not better.....	66	66
(3)	It's hardly fair to bring children into the world with the way things look for the future.....	56	58
(4)	These days a person doesn't really know whom he can count on.....	80	83
(5)	There's little use in writing to public officials because often they aren't really interested in the problems of the average man.....	70	65

[7] For differences between town and country residents in 1973 see Coleman, Coughenour, Gabbard and Zierath (1973).

Thus, despite the general improvement in the objective conditions of life, they were as despairing of societal conditions as before.[8]

OPINIONS ABOUT THE DIRECTION OF CHANGE IN QUALITY OF LIFE AND THE CURRENT SITUATION

In 1973 the respondents were asked about the direction of change in various aspects of quality of life during the past decade, i.e., whether they thought it had improved, gotten worse, or remained the same. Then they were asked for their assessment of the current situation in each respect, i.e., whether it was very good, pretty good, fair, or poor. Most of the questions and the heads' and homemakers' responses are shown in Table 2.

More than half the respondents in 1973 felt that the quality of life during the past decade had improved for most people, the poor, blacks, the county as a place to live, and specifically, with respect to wages and salaries, public schools, post-high-school education, medical care, welfare programs, transportation and roads, public utilities, and public housing. And, in each of these aspects, more than half rated the current situation as pretty good to very good.

Those aspects that respondents in the greatest proportions (30 percent or more) thought had gotten worse were: the physical environment, real income, agriculture, law enforcement, and obedience to laws. Except for the physical environment a majority of the respondents felt that the current situation with respect to each of these aspects was only fair to poor. A majority also felt that the current situation was fair or poor with respect to opportunities for young and older people, job opportunities, county government, and recreational opportunities. Opportunities for young people, job opportunities and law enforcement were most often rated as "poor" by these respondents.

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[8] As in 1961, anomia was more widespread among country people in these four counties in 1973 than in the other states surveyed (McCann, 1975).

One's opinion about personal and social conditions in society often is shaped by where he lives and his position in society, and this is true of the people in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky. Fewer heads and homemakers in the country (63 percent) than residents of the towns (78 percent) were convinced that the quality of life in general for most families in the county had improved during the past decade (Coleman and Gabbard, 1974). Moreover, more of the community leaders in these four counties (86 percent), most of whom lived in towns, felt that improvement had been the general experience of most people in their county than did the country residents, and this favorable point of view was most often expressed by heads and homemakers who had had more formal schooling and higher incomes.

Nevertheless, the families living in the country in these counties were as likely as the community leaders to say that the quality of life as they had personally experienced it had improved during the past decade (57 percent to 56 percent, respectively), and they were only somewhat less likely than the residents of the towns (67 percent) to feel that their personal situation had improved. Among the country as well as the town residents those with more education and family income were more likely to say that their own family situation had improved during the past decade, that they were more satisfied with current income, and that the level of "real" income was satisfactory. Thus, a perception of improvement in quality of life has been common to most people throughout the mountain area, although some were more able to take advantage of changing opportunities and more often felt that they had benefited from them than did others.

The quality of the physical environment is one aspect of the quality of life about which there are sharp differences of opinion both among persons living within the mountain area and outside it. During the past decade the quality of the physical environment has been affected by factors working in opposite directions. Many communities have carried on clean-up and community beautification campaigns and have improved solid waste disposal and sewage treatment. Higher levels of living, of course, increase the magnitude of these problems. In the public mind, however, perhaps the most serious problem has been the increase in surface mining and, to many, the resulting destruction of the physical environment

(Caudill, 1970; Brooks, 1972).

More heads and homemakers felt that the quality of the physical environment had "gotten worse" than felt that it had "improved," thereby supporting the contention that the quality of the physical environment is deteriorating. Respondents in the two counties where strip-mining was most prevalent were somewhat more inclined to say that the direction of change was for the worse than in the two counties which had little strip-mining. But, overall, half felt that there had been no change in the quality of the physical environment, and more than half regarded the current situation as "pretty good" or "very good," Thiswas the prevailing view in all the counties except Perry county, where 43 percent thought that it had not changed, and an equal proportion thought it had "gotten worse"; only 41 percent felt that the current situation was "pretty good" or "very good."

Opinion on what to do about surface mining is divided in these counties because, while it adversely affects the environment, it also means jobs and higher incomes. For many people these have a higher priority. Consequently, in mid-1973 only 21 percent wanted strip-mining abolished; 54 percent wanted strip-mining continued but under more stringent controls, and the remainder did not think any change was necessary or had no opinion (Gabbard and Coughenour, 1973).

Increased control is needed to avoid disastrous earth slides and to minimize the destruction of roads by heavy coal trucks. "The higher education and income groups more often favor[ed] the continuation of surface mining under stricter control, and... [were] less likely to want to prohibit it altogether" (Gabbard and Coughenour, 1973). Preservation of the environment was the most common concern of those wanting to prohibit surface mining. Jobs and other economic considerations were important to those who wanted surface mining continued with or without stricter controls. It seems clear that mountain people are not much concerned about the consequences of surface mining for esthetic appearances or ecological balance. Their views are shaped by the more immediate concerns of safety and income security. Thus, their interests, as they see them, are best served by programs that provide better control of the adverse effects of surface mining rather than by its prohibition.

Several additional conclusions seem warranted from consideration of the opinions about the direction of change during the past 10 to 12 years. First, with few exceptions, the weight of opinion with respect to the direction of change in quality of life parallels objective changes in these counties during the past decade or so. Second, in their ratings of the current situation, again with few exceptions, the opinions of these country residents reflect standards of evaluation that extend beyond their local area and encompass the nation. In this respect, the once distinctive mountain culture is provincial no more. The quality of life which mountain people want and desire is similar to that of people in other sections of the country. (See also Photiadis, 1970a.)

Although this seems evident in nearly all their responses, the most striking indication of a point of view common to all Americans is in the head and homemaker assessments of their income situation. They had a dual frame of reference, as do most people. On the one hand, with reference to their own past circumstances they recognized that family income now was much higher, as indeed it was. On the other hand, country people were no more satisfied than they had been in the early 1960's with their level of income, and most were dissatisfied with their current income in "real" terms, i.e., the goods and services which money permits one to obtain. Although the improvement in income levels has permitted them to acquire more goods and services than in earlier years, their desires in these respects had expanded during the decade as did those of people elsewhere in the United States. Mountain families now desire a standard of living compatible with that of the rest of the nation.

Comparable with aspects of the economic situation as a source of dissatisfaction for these mountain families were aspects of governmental and political affairs. Opinion about the relatively poor quality of local government was closely related to similar opinion about the quality of politics and political parties ($r=0.76$).[9]

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[9] Pearsonian correlations (r) above 0.50 generally are considered to reflect a high degree of correlation for opinions of the kind obtained in this study. Correlations between 0.30 and 0.50 are of moderate size, while low, but statistically significant, correlations ranged from 0.15 to 0.30 for these data.

The opinions of heads and homemakers about the quality of law enforcement were closely related to how they felt about the tendency of people in the county to obey the law ($r=0.57$), and evaluations of the quality of life in all four respects were moderately related to each other. That is, those who felt that the current situation was poor in one of these respects tended to feel it was poor in the other respects also. Thus, the country families in these counties possessed a general and rather broad attitude that expressed a lack of confidence in and satisfaction with, their local political institutions, and this contributed in a significant way to their feeling of the low quality of life in the mountains.[10]

It is a normal human tendency for one's opinion about life in general to be colored by the number and importance of one's dissatisfactions or satisfactions, and this is true for opinions about the quality of life of country people in the mountains. Aspects of both the economic and political situations were unsatisfactory to most country people in the mountains.

The significance of this combination of circumstances can be seen in the relationships of these sources of dissatisfaction with opinions about the current situation and opportunities for poor people, young people, blacks, and the county as a place to live. Most heads and homemakers felt that the current situation for poor people was satisfactory. Nevertheless, their opinion in this respect was most closely related to how they felt about real income and wages and salaries and less so to their ratings of the situation in the public and private schools, which most felt to be generally satisfactory. Other aspects of the quality of life, which were felt to be satisfactory, were much less importantly related to opinion about the current situation for the poor.

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[10] For discussions of politics and government in Appalachia see Wager (1962), Caudill (1962), Lee (1972), Photiadis (1970b), Bethel (1972), Ball (1970b), and Weller (1966).

The feelings of country families about the situation and opportunities for young people, which most felt to be unsatisfactory (fair or poor), were most closely associated with their opinions about job and recreational opportunities, and, to a lesser degree, with the quality of local government, public housing, wages and salaries, and real income.[11] Of these six aspects of the quality of life only public housing and wages and salaries were regarded as satisfactory by most people.

Most respondents felt that the quality of life for blacks had improved during the past decade and that the situation now was pretty good or very good.[12] Opinion regarding the current situation and opportunities for blacks was moderately associated with the opinions of these respondents as to opportunities for education after the high school years, recreational opportunities, and real income. Post-high-school educational opportunities were generally felt to be much improved and generally satisfactory at present. This is the only case in which favorable opinion about the current situation was strongly associated with a general opinion about the current situation for particular types of people.

Most heads and homemakers in country areas of these mountain counties were optimistic about the county as a place to live, but what specific aspects of the quality of life were most closely associated with this feeling? One might have supposed that an optimistic attitude about life in the county would be strongly associated with various aspects of life about which they were similarly optimistic, namely, wages and salaries, the physical environment, public schools, medical care and services, welfare programs, public housing, public utilities, roads and the like. However, this was

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[11] The correlations of these aspects of quality of life with opinion about the situation for young people ranged from 0.50 to 0.24.

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[12] There were few blacks in these counties in 1970--none in Wolfe County and only 3.5 percent of the total population in Harlan, Perry and Whitley counties. Blacks were less numerous proportionately in rural areas, 2.5 percent in the three counties with any black population. Thus the opinions about the situation of blacks are largely those of whites.

not generally the case. Opinion on the county as a place to live was most closely related to opinions about the quality of politics and political parties, local government, recreational opportunities, public housing, wages and salaries, and how they felt about the situation for poor people, the young, and the elderly.[13] Heads and homemakers generally held optimistic attitudes only with respect to three of these eight aspects, i.e., public housing, wages and salaries, and the poor. It might be concluded, therefore, that country families in the mountains were generally satisfied with the county as a place to live despite their dissatisfaction with the economic, political, and other aspects of life.

MAN'S CONDITION IN SOCIETY

Earlier it was noted that most of these heads and homemakers felt despairing, hopeless, and apathetic about man's condition in society. This was indicated in their responses to the Srole Anomia Scale questions on living only for today, the worsening lot of the average man, the poor life chances for children, distrust of other people, and the uselessness of writing to public officials.[14] It seems that opinion about these aspects should be related to opinions about the quality of life in the county as well as to the family's social and economic situation, and to some degree it was.

Although the feeling that one must live for today was not much associated with subjective ratings of different aspects of quality of life, the belief that the lot of the average man was getting worse was associated with many of the ratings--most notably that obedience to law and law enforcement were poor, and that real income was poor. People who felt that it was unfair to bring children into the world under present circumstances also tended to feel

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[13] Correlations with each of these factors ranged between 0.20 and 0.29.

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[14] Sociologists have come to regard an "agree" response to these items as reflecting the individual's feeling of hopelessness of despair rather than the psychological effect of anomie in society which Srole intended (Meier and Bell, 1959; Nettler, 1957; Rushing, 1972:81). These five items are moderately correlated and comprise a scale, but the responses to the individual items are dealt with in this analysis as an aid in interpretation.

that real incomes were poor and that their own family situation had gotten worse during the past decade. Those who did not know who to "count on" (lack of trust) were similarly minded with respect to the unsatisfactory situation of real incomes, politics and political parties, their current income, the deterioration of their own personal situation during the past decade, and the situation and opportunities for poor people. The attitude that there was little use in writing to public officials was associated with opinions that the current situation was unsatisfactory for politics and political parties, county government, and law enforcement and that their own family situation had become worse during the past decade. Generalized attitudes about the unsatisfactory nature of contemporary society thus were connected with opinions about various aspects of the quality of life--most notably opinions about the quality of the political and economic situation and the deterioration in their own family situation during the past decade.

In 1973, as in 1960, the actual social and economic circumstances in which the family found itself had the most important effect on their feelings of hopelessness and despair. Analyses of the 1961 survey data and other studies have shown that the more people are deprived in social and economic respects, the more they tend to express attitudes of despair, hopelessness and apathy, and this seems to be particularly true of Appalachian residents (Cole and Zuckerman, 1964; Alleger, 1966; Crowden, 1970; McDonald. 1975). Mountain people with low family income or income per capita, low occupational status, little education, or low levels of living were most likely in both years to be despondent about man's condition in contemporary society.

However, it is not a simple relationship. Some people whose personal social and economic circumstances are relatively poor do not have a strong desire for a better life and do not feel deprived of it. On the other hand, those with a strong desire to improve their circumstances may feel deprived of necessities regardless of their current situation. Thus, it is the desire to improve which produces a feeling of deprivation that is associated with despair and hopelessness (Crowden, 1970).

As Photiadis (1970a:13) has shown, the desire of mountain people for improvement is stronger now than ever before. It accompanies the actual

improvement during the 1960's in family incomes and levels of living. Although the Eastern Kentucky families with lower per capita incomes per family more often felt that they had to go without necessities or that their family situation had worsened during the past decade than those with higher per capita incomes, it is only among the higher per capita income group that feelings of deprivation concerning the necessities of life were associated with feelings of despair and hopelessness about man in society. By contrast, among the lower per capita income families such feelings were associated with opinions about the unsatisfactory situation with respect to county government, politics and political parties, and law enforcement. In other words, among the mountain poor, feelings of despair were connected to their opinions about the political-bureaucratic situation rather than the lack of the necessities of life as such. Although the sources of dissatisfaction thus differ, the feelings of relative deprivation of the desirable things in life were greater and hopelessness and despair somewhat more prevalent than a decade earlier. Such attitudes not only often contribute to various maladaptive patterns of behavior (Ball, 1970a), but also to unrealistic beliefs about the efficacy of educational, political, and economic institutions (Nelson and Frost, 1971; Ball, 1970b; Gabbard and Coughenour, 1973).

DIFFERENCES AMONG FAMILIES IN QUALITY OF LIFE IN 1973

Families with adolescent children at home (Stage III) were largest in 1973 as they had been in 1961 (Table 1). However, Stage II families, those with young children, led the way in 1972 with the largest median total income ($4,253 in 1960 dollars) while the oldest families (Stage V) had the smallest incomes ($2,066), as they had in 1960. But on a per capita basis working-age families without children (Stage I) had the most favorable financial situation ($1,477 in 1960 dollars) while families with adult children at home (Stage IV) had by far the poorest income situation ($701 per capita).

The smaller percentage of working-aged male heads of families employed in 1973 than in 1961 was mainly due to the lower proportions of heads of

families without children and those with adolescent children who were employed in 1973 (I, 56 percent; III, 78 percent). The over-80 percent level of employment which characterized the first three stages in 1961 was equalled in 1973 only by the heads of families with pre-adolescent children. Except for the heads of families with pre-adolescent children (Stage III), smaller proportions of family heads under 65 years considered themselves fully able to work than in 1961, and the proportions were surprisingly low. For families without children (Stage I) and those with post-adolescent children (Stage IV) the explanation of the decline in work ability is in the higher proportions of heads of these families obtaining early retirement, while for heads of families with adolescent children (Stage III) the difference between 1973 and 1961 is primarily in the larger proportion with limited disabilities.

Educational levels were higher in 1973 than in 1961 for heads of families at all stages of the family life cycle (Table 1). The greatest increases in educational levels, however, occurred among heads of families in the last two stages (IV and V), but those in the first two stages had the highest educational levels in 1973, as they had in 1961. The latter relationship is consistent with the trend to more schooling among younger age groups of the population.

Although in overall terms male heads were not more inclined to participate in formal organizations in 1973 than in 1961 and homemakers less so, there was a marked change during the intervening years in participation patterns for types of heads and homemakers. In 1961, those with young or adolescent children (Stages II and III) least often were members of formal organizations. But, in 1973 there were no pronounced differences in participation among family life cycle types, although Stages II and III heads and homemakers more often than the others tended to belong to some kind of formal organization. If this shift persists, it may be indicative of higher levels of organizational participation in the future.

Between 1961 and 1973 the most notable occupational shifts were away from farming and into the craftsmen, foremen, and laborer categories.

Among the family-stage groups, heads of families in the first two stages were most often engaged in farming or farm work in 1961, and they led the way both in moving out of farming and in increases in the craftsmen and foremen and laborer groups between 1961 and 1973. Stage I heads of working-age families without children and Stage II heads of families with pre-adolescent children, which overall had the highest education, also were the least satisfied with their jobs in 1973 (Table 1). Heads of these families were more often dissatisfied with their chances for advancement, the amount of money earned, and retirement and other benefits than they had been in 1961.

By comparison with the early 1960's families with post-adolescent children and older families without children (Stages IV and V) were the principal beneficiaries of the improvement in recent years in Social Security and other retirement programs. In 1973, 59 percent and 96 percent of the Stage IV and V, families, respectively, received income from these sources--an increase of about 30 percent over 1961 in each case. The earlier retirement of working-aged people also is reflected in the increase from 13 percent to 45 percent during the intervening years in heads of Stage 1 families without children who received Social Security and retirement income. In 1973 more of the older families without children (25 percent) received income on investments than in 1961 (4 percent), and a higher proportion of families at all stages of the life cycle, except the last, were receiving some form of government welfare in 1973 than in 1961. In this respect, low income families at all stages of the family life cycle have benefited from the expansion in various kinds of social welfare programs during the 1960's, although more of those at the end of their working life have received benefits. Moreover, most families have more alternative sources of income than before.

In the material aspects of living, older families without children (Stage V) had the most spacious quarters in 1973 as in 1961, while those families at all stages with children at home were the most crowded, but they also improved most owing to having fewer children in the latter year. Families did not differ much in the possession of most durable consumer goods and household conveniences, but in 1973 the older families least often had an automobile, central heating, or a television set; families with pre-adolescent children least often had a telephone or home freezer. For the most part families at all stages in the family life cycle shared in the general advance in levels of living.

In 1973 there was a general relationship between family income per capita and both the felt satisfaction-dissatisfaction with family income and the belief of heads and homemakers that they were unable to acquire the necessities of living. Nevertheless, although families differed by stage of the life cycle in per capita income neither the heads nor the homemakers differed by stage of the family life cycle in the extent of their satisfaction with family income or the belief that they could not acquire necessities. In their perceptions of change in their own family situation during the past decade, families in the first three stages of the family life cycle were more likely to say that their situation had improved than were families in the last two stages. The perception of change during the decade was only somewhat related to current family income per capita. As was evident in 1961, therefore, the absence of major differences in dissatisfactions among these types of families tends to parallel the lack of systematic and major differences in the possession of the conveniences of living, rather than current income differences.

Moreover, although individuals differed in their expressions of hopelessness and despair about the nature of society, these differences were not related to the stage in the family life cycle which they occupied. These types of families also differed relatively little in their general opinions of the direction of change during the past decade for poor people, young people, old people, and the county as a place to live as well as in their ratings of the current situation.

In their opinions about the direction of change for specific aspects of the quality of life listed in Table 2 most of the differences among respondents by family life cycle stage are relatively small and not statistically significant. The exceptions are for wages and salaries, real income, and job opportunities, which Stage V heads and homemakers more often felt had improved than did those in other stages of the family life cycle. Moreover, with two exceptions, respondents at different family life cycle stages tended to be alike in their assessments of the current situation. The exceptions are with respect to real income, which older respondents without children (Stage V) most often regarded as pretty good or very good, and the current situation and opportunities in the public schools.

It is apparent that the opinions about the direction of change in jobs and income during the past decade or so were shaped somewhat by family situation. Older families without children (Stage V) who were not in the labor force and who more often derived income from transfer payments were more inclined to view changes in the income and job situations optimistically than those who were more dependent on earned income. In general, the improvement in welfare programs during the 1960's seems to have come closer to meeting expectations of mountain people, whether or not they received welfare income, than have the improvements in job opportunities and wages and salaries.

Finally, although many schools have been consolidated and educational programs at all levels have been improved in the mountain areas during the 1960's, primary and secondary schools are still much below the standards in other parts of the country, especially those in the larger urban centers. Although these families did not differ in their assessments of the direction of change in school systems in the mountains, families without children, both the young and the old (Stages I and V), tended to rate the current situation and opportunities in the public schools optimistically (35 percent in each case rating very good). By contrast to heads and homemakers at other stages, those with pre-adolescent children were more moderate in their assessments of the school situation and opportunities. Only 15 percent rated them as very good, and none rated the opportunities as poor. The most probable explanation is that the different opinions of Stage II heads and homemakers is shaped by their more immediate experiences with the elementary schools.

SUMMARY

State and federal programs during the 1960's, along with out-migration and reduced birth rates, resulted in substantial improvement in the material conditions of life of country families living in the Cumberland Plateau of Eastern Kentucky. Incomes increased, although many remain in poverty. Nearly all rely on nonfarm sources of earned income or income supplements from retirement and governmental programs. Levels of education and living have improved, although they do not equal those elsewhere in the nation. Through improved roads and an increase in telephones, radio and television, country people now are much better connected with on-going affairs of the larger society. And, there is some basis for optimism that in the future mountain people,

who until now have belied the notion of Americans as a nation of "joiners," may begin to seek and support formally organized means of expressing their needs and attaining desired ends.

Families at all stages of the life cycle have shared for the most part in the advances in material welfare despite differences in family income per capita. Indeed, most heads and homemakers felt that the quality of life of most people had improved--especially so for blacks and the poor. But, in their opinion the current situation remains unsatisfactory for both the young and the elderly. With respect to their own family situation in 1973 compared with a decade earlier, working-age families and those with young or pre-adolescent children tended to feel that their family situation was better now. Older heads and homemakers most often felt that their own family situation was worse.

Aspects of the distinctive family life cycle situations of these families seem to have affected their opinions about the direction of change and the current situation in general only with respect to job opportunities, real income, and the public schools. And, in general, as might be expected, the better educated and those with higher incomes were more optimistic about most aspects of the current situation than those whose circumstances were less satisfactory in these respects.

In their attitudes about most aspects of the political and economic situation and of man's condition in society in general, most country people expressed considerable dissatisfaction. This was so despite the considerable improvement in economic respects, which most had enjoyed and recognized. It seems evident that for many country families with moderate incomes, the feelings of hopelessness and despair were associated with the rapid expansion in desires and aspirations which accompanied rising levels of income and living. For heads and homemakers with lower incomes, such feelings more often were connected to opinions that "government" and "politics," were unsatisfactory, and were responsible for their difficulties. In consequence, the general dissatisfaction with man's condition in society in the early 1970's was more widespread than it had been a decade or so earlier.

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Table 1 SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF FAMILIES AND HOUSEHOLDS IN FOUR EASTERN KENTUCKY COUNTIES BY LIFE CYCLE STAGE, 1960-61 AND 1972-73

ITEM	YEAR	FAMILY LIFE CYCLE STAGE*** I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Family life cycle stage (percent):	1961	12	14	21	32	21	100
	1973	18	16	21	20	25	100
Median size of Household:	1961	2.5	5.0	5.9	5.3	2.4	4.1
	1973	2.4	4.3	4.8	4.6	2.3	3.1
Median years of schooling (heads):	1961	8.3	8.5	8.2	6.6	6.3	7.0
	1973	8.6	9.5	8.2	8.3	8.3	8.3
Median family income:	1960	$1700	$2111	$2200	$1765	$1167	$1675
	1972*	$3380	$4253	$3949	$2633	$2066	$3380
Median per capita income:	1960	$ 855	$ 490	$ 419	$ 410	$ 719	$ 521
	1972*	$1477	$1116	$1194	$ 701	$1187	$1058
Percent male heads employed full or part-time:	1961	81	88	83	64	19	65
	1973	54	84	77	57	9	56
Percent male heads under age 65 fully able to work:	1961	74	85	96	71	--	79
	1973	65	90	78	62	--	73
Job satisfaction (males):	1961**	92	92	83	83	--	75
	1973**	67	67	75	75	--	75
Percent on hard-surfaced road:	1961	45	38	33	39	44	40
	1973	79	76	81	80	78	79
Median rooms per person:	1961	2.5	1.0	1.0	1.2	3.0	1.3
	1973	2.5	1.3	1.3	1.3	3.0	1.7

(Continued)

* 1972 income and per capita income in 1960 dollars

** Percent of 12 different aspects of a person's job with which for each aspect 75 percent or more of the employed are satisfied

*** Stage:
I - Working-age families without children (Head under age 60)
II - Families with pre-adolescent aged children only
III - Families with adolescent children, with none older
IV - Families with post-adolescent aged children, with or without other children
V - Older families without children (Head aged 60 or over)

Table 1 (Continued)

ITEM	YEAR	FAMILY LIFE CYCLE STAGE*** I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Percent with automobile:	1961	58	65	53	45	26	47
	1973	73	88	78	63	31	64
Percent with gas or electric range:	1961	71	70	61	61	64	64
	1973	91	98	96	88	98	94
Percent with water piped in house:	1961	48	32	51	38	39	42
	1973	77	70	78	67	75	74
Percent with electric sewing machines:	1961	16	14	11	13	11	13
	1973	39	34	61	45	45	46
Percent with a home freezer:	1961	13	19	12	24	14	17
	1973	38	26	42	53	48	42
Percent with inside flush toilet:	1961	26	19	11	11	20	16
	1973	68	62	63	50	63	61
Percent with bath or shower:	1961	32	22	16	20	23	22
	1973	66	60	60	50	63	60
Percent with central heating:	1961	26	19	7	12	11	13
	1973	43	46	31	23	25	33
Percent with telephone:	1961	23	32	21	25	30	26
	1973	61	48	69	70	74	66
Percent with radio:	1961	87	78	86	85	88	85
	1973	96	96	97	94	93	95
Percent with TV:	1961	68	57	61	63	41	58
	1973	96	100	96	95	86	94
Percent with weekly newspaper:	1961	13	8	4	13	14	11
	1973	18	8	21	22	28	20
Percent with daily newspaper:	1961	39	22	21	29	43	30
	1973	36	16	30	33	36	31

Table 1 (Continued)

ITEM	YEAR	FAMILY LIFE CYCLE STAGE*** I	II	III	IV	V	TOTAL
Percent male heads feeling income unsatisfactory:	1961	36	25	32	41	34	34
	1973	28	36	36	38	23	33
Percent homemakers feeling income unsatisfactory:	1961	10	35	37	25	39	30
	1973	28	23	33	28	28	28
Percent male heads who feel they can't afford necessities:	1961	39	59	55	44	33	46
	1973	55	60	65	44	59	56
Percent homemakers who feel they can't afford necessities:	1961	4	38	34	26	33	28
	1973	48	53	49	47	61	52
Percent male heads not member of organizations:	1961	50	75	61	38	36	50
	1973	63	40	51	55	55	53
Percent homemakers not member of organizations:	1961	35	66	48	25	14	36
	1973	52	50	42	58	52	51
Opinion about family situation in 1973 compared to 10 years ago (percent):	Better	70	67	61	46	49	57
	Same	21	28	23	38	34	30
	Worse	9	5	16	16	17	13

Table 2 OPINIONS OF HOUSEHOLD HEADS AND HOMEMAKERS IN FOUR EASTERN KENTUCKY COUNTIES CONCERNING THE DIRECTION OF CHANGE IN QUALITY OF LIFE ASPECTS IN THEIR COUNTIES IN THE PAST 10 YEARS, AND THEIR RATING OF THE CURRENT SITUATION AS TO EACH ASPECT, 1973

QUALITY OF LIFE FOR (OR WITH RESPECT TO):	DIRECTION OF CHANGE:			RATING OF CURRENT SITUATION:			
	IMPROVED	GOTTEN WORSE	REMAINED SAME	VERY GOOD	PRETTY GOOD	FAIR	POOR
Most people (in general)	63	20	17	--	--	--	--
Poor people	74	8	18	9	45	35	11
Young people	42	20	38	3	26	23	48
Old people	46	12	42	7	33	29	31
Negroes (blacks)	56	11	33	13	49	23	15
Physical environment	19	31	50	15	37	29	19
Wages and salaries	79	3	18	8	50	34	8
"Real" income	26	42	35	1	24	43	32
Job opportunities	47	26	27	3	26	26	45
Agriculture and land use	40	33	27	5	36	33	26
Public schools	77	12	11	29	48	16	7
Post high school education opportunities	79	5	16	23	52	17	8
Medical care and services	62	19	19	25	34	23	18
Welfare programs	62	17	21	11	46	28	15
Transportation and roads	71	18	11	6	49	26	19
Public utilities	79	4	17	14	57	22	7
Public housing	71	8	21	8	49	29	14
Politics and political parties	16	25	59	5	22	45	28
County government	27	21	52	7	28	41	24

(continued)

Table 2 (Continued)

QUALITY OF LIFE FOR (OR WITH RESPECT TO):	DIRECTION OF CHANGE: IMPROVED	GOTTEN WORSE	REMAINED SAME	RATING OF CURRENT SITUATION: VERY GOOD	PRETTY GOOD	FAIR	POOR
Law enforcement	20	38	42	2	27	31	40
Obedience to laws	20	38	42	4	33	37	26
Religion	36	16	48	22	48	22	8
Recreational opportunities	45	7	48	6	30	29	35
County as a place to live	58	9	33	23	47	24	6

-- = not available-not asked

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